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## No. IV.

LENGTH OF THE ROOTS OF PLANTS OF  
WHEAT.

*The Thanks of the Society were voted to the EARL of  
MACCLESFIELD for the following Letter.*

SIR,

*Conduit Street, April 12, 1831.*

A FEW years ago, Mr. Badcock, a very sensible and very considerable farmer at Pyrton, in Oxfordshire, having occasion to dig for the foundation of a building, in a field at that time under a crop of wheat, was much surprised by observing the small fibres of the roots of the wheat had penetrated much deeper into the earth than he had any idea they did. He determined to endeavour to ascertain how deep they could be traced through the different strata of earth. For this purpose, he had the ground opened close to a plant of wheat, and dug perpendicularly down to the depth of six feet, and having fixed a narrow board close against it, proceeded in the same manner on another side of the plant; and so on till he had secured the earth to that depth between the four boards firmly lashed together. He then had it placed upon an inclined plane, and, carefully removing the boards, with great caution and perseverance washed away all the earth adhering to the root and its very small fibres, and was very much surprised at their extent. He repeated the trial on several other plants of wheat, and traced their average depth to between five and six feet. He gave one

of these plants to the late Mr. Fane, member for the county, who had it, for preservation, secured in a close glass tube. From him it came into my possession ; and I now present it to the Society, both as a curiosity in Agriculture, worthy of a place in their collection, and as a means of the circumstance being more generally known, which may induce trials of the same nature in other places.

The accompanying print\* is by a son of Mr. Badcock's, an eminent land-surveyor at Oxford.

I am, Sir, &c. &c.

A. AIKIN, *Esq.*

MACCLESFIELD.

*Secretary, &c. &c.*

\* The print represents five plants of wheat in different stages of growth, with their roots descending to various depths, from one foot to more than five feet, according to the more or less advanced state of the plant. The soil for the first foot is a hazel loam, to which succeeds gravelly clay passing into sand, and this, at the depth of about three feet and a half, rests on blue clay.